

**Dr. Claudia Griffin**

**What are Postsecondary Credentials  
and Why are they Needed?**


**Based on TEN 25-19  
And Selected Websites**



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### Why is a credential needed?

1. By definition, occupational skills training (OST) is a program of study that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential.
2. The only training that uses the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), is OST.
3. Therefore, every program of study on the ETPL must lead to a recognized postsecondary credential.



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What we hear often is, “Our school trains students better than anyone else. Why do we need a credential to do that?”

The bottom line is that WIOA can’t pay for it if you don’t. We can’t pay tuition. And if we can’t pay tuition, whether we actually pay it or someone else does, we can’t provide supportive services.”

These steps are a little simplistic, but they convey the main idea.

- By definition, Occupational skills training leads to a recognized postsecondary credential (20 CFR 681.540).  
[eCFR :: 20 CFR 681.540 -- What is occupational skills training?](#)
- The only type of training used with ETPs is occupational skills training. There are other types of training that WIOA can pay for, but they generally don’t involve your institution – at least not to the extent occupational skills training does. And the other types of training don’t require you to be on the Eligible Training Provider List. (TEGL 19-16 & TEGL 21-16 ).  
[https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL\\_19-16.pdf](https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL_19-16.pdf)  
[https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL\\_21-16.pdf](https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL_21-16.pdf)
- Therefore, every program of study on the ETPL must lead to a recognized postsecondary credential.

**Now, just because the training entity does not award a credential does not mean the program does not lead to a credential. There are other things.**

## What is a postsecondary credential?

WIOA law defines “recognized postsecondary credential” as *a credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involve or Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.*



Definition found at WIOA § 3(52)

That's as clear as mud! Let's look a little closer and see if we can figure this out. All of these words can have lots of definitions.

Unfortunately, we don't get to make up our own definitions to these terms. We don't get to twist things around to be like we want them to be. We have to take what rule-makers say.

### Common Credentials awarded by Colleges and Universities

**TEN 25-19: The entity that issues the post-secondary credential must have the authority to issue it.**

Issued by educational institutions under the authority of ADHE, with the accomplishment of specific GPA's:

Certificate of Proficiency: 6 – 21 credit hours of specific courses

Technical Certificate: 21 – 45 credit hours of specific courses

Advanced Certificate/Endorsement: An Associate Degree plus 21-45 credit hours of specific courses

Associate Degree: 60 – 80 credit hours of specific courses

Bachelor's Degree: 120 – 150 credit hours of specific courses



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Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 25-19 gives several examples of credentials. These are the most common credentials awarded by a postsecondary college or university, with some general guideline. The student must take specific courses and how mastery of the subject by earning a specific grade point average.

[https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN\\_25-19.pdf](https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN_25-19.pdf)

TEN 25-19 says the entity that issues the credential must have the authority to issue it. For certificates and degrees in Arkansas, that authority is the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB), whose staff is the Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE). **If you give a certificate that is not authorized by AHECB for you to give, that is not a recognized postsecondary credential.** (Note the difference in “certificate” and “certification” in TEN 25-19.)

The exceptions are a few independent colleges, like Ouachita, Harding, Hendrix, and John Brown, who were grandfathered in. No other postsecondary school in Arkansas may even offer a program of study that leads to a postsecondary credential without the approval of the AHECB. And even these schools must ask permission of the AHECB before adding a program of study that is outside their present scope.

This slide has some general guidelines to let you know what more about certificates and degrees, but if you are a public postsecondary school, you know that every program of study you offer must have been approved by AHECB. And most courses you offer must follow specific guidelines and must be identified by an ACTS number so that everyone will know how they match up with courses at other institutions.

In you are interested in the requirements, you will find a great deal of information in the Academic Handbook on the ADHE website. If you are the VC or VP of Academics for a public college or university, you probably have this Handbook memorized, and you may have given some input into writing some of its changes over the years.

## Who gives them authority to offer these credentials?

The Arkansas Division of Higher Education ([www.adhe.edu](http://www.adhe.edu)) and the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board has some level of authority over every entity that offers a postsecondary credential in Arkansas or any postsecondary education or training in Arkansas (or advertises in Arkansas.)



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Well, almost. There are a few exceptions. I don't think they have authority over Occupational Skills training and WAGE programs offered by WIOA title II Adult Education.


This authority of the AHECB extends to private career training schools. Arkansas Law charges the AHECB and ADHE with the responsibility of protecting Arkansans against fraudulent private career training schools. This doesn't necessarily mean you, if you are a private career trainer. And it doesn't mean that your private career training isn't good. It just means that your ability to offer training in Arkansas must be approved by the AHECB. Very few private trainers are authorized to award credentials, although we will see later what credentials their students may earn.

Most private college and out-of-state colleges that have programs in Arkansas or advertise in Arkansas are also under the authority of the AHECB. Any certificate or degree that sounds like a degree offered at a public college must be reviewed. The exceptions are those colleges and universities that I have mentioned before and any degree that cannot be confused with a degree offered at a public school (Like Bachelor's of Bible)

When a credential is not given by the school, ADHE does not generally have authority over the **contents** of training, although other entities (such as the State Board of Nursing) may. These are general guidelines concerning the content of training that must be mastered before a licensure or occupational exam is given. The occupational licensure or certification awarded after the exam is the credential here, as will be discussed later. [www.adhe.edu](http://www.adhe.edu)

## Accreditation

- Look in the college/university catalog
- Higher Education Learning Commission?
- Accreditation of a particular program or group of programs
- ADHE does not accredit institutions or programs. It authorizes training/education to be provided.



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TEN 25-19 reminds us that if a credential is offered by an educational institution, the institution must be accredited. You can rest assured that if an institution is approved by AHECB, and the entity offers for-credit courses, it is accredited by some entity, but that entity is not ADHE or AHECB. ADHE and AHECB merely authorize entities to provide a particular programs or study or training. If you hear someone say they are accredited by ADHE, they don't know what they are talking about.

Non-credit courses (courses that do not give "semester credit hours") are not required to be accredited.

If an institution loses its accreditation, it will no longer be allowed to operate in Arkansas.

The main accreditation entity for Arkansas institutions is the Higher Education Learning Commission (often called North Central), but specific programs or groups of programs may be accredited by other entities, too.

Look in the college catalog or school information to see what accreditation the institution has. The college catalog is a great source for lots of information. For example, if it says that no college credit is given for this class, probably no credential is given by the college for the class.

For example, health profession programs may be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs, instead of or in addition to the Higher Education Learning Commission.

[https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN\\_25-19.pdf](https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN_25-19.pdf)

## Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Certificates of Completion of Registered Apprenticeships are issued by the Department of Labor or a federally recognized State Apprenticeship Agency

[www.apprenticeship.gov](http://www.apprenticeship.gov)



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Yes, a Certificate of Completion of a Registered Apprenticeship is a credential, even though Certificates of Completion of a certain number of clock hours of training are not credentials. Certificates of completion of Registered Apprenticeship programs are different.

Pages 1 & 2 of TEN 25-19, Attachment I list some of the entities that may issue postsecondary credentials. One group who has the authority to issue credentials is a government agency who has been given that authority by law. Certificates of completion of Registered Apprenticeship programs are issued by the Department of Labor or a federally recognized State Apprenticeship Agency for occupational proficiency and successful completion of all training requirements.


[www.apprenticeship.gov](http://www.apprenticeship.gov)



## Occupational License

- Awarded by a governmental agency
- Gives legal authority to do a specific job
- Based on some combination of degree or certificate attainment, certification, assessments, or work experience
- Are time-limited (must be renewed, usually based on continuing education)

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/occupational-licensing-statute-database.aspx>



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Usually given by a state governmental entity, but could be federal or local

Examples are:

- Teacher's certificate
- Certificated Public Accountant (CPA)
- Attorney
- Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)
- Physical Therapist

Information about occupational licenses required in Arkansas can be found on the website in the slide. Click on the image, choose Arkansas, then choose an occupation for required licenses.

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/occupational-licensing-statute-database.aspx>

## Occupational Certifications

- Granted by a third-party-non-governmental agency
- Not required for work
- Based on industry-wide certifications
- Based on the successful completion of an examination or assessment
- Require some practical experience

<https://www.careeronestop.org/Credentials/Toolkit/find-certifications.aspx>



You can also find information on occupational licensures by clicking on this website at the bottom of this slide and choosing License Finder.

You can also find information about occupational certifications here.

TEN 25-19 talks about the difference between a certificate and a certification. If you are confused about which is what, you may want to look at that part of the TEN.


Certifications are usually awarded by a non-governmental body after taking a test. The standards are usually not defined by government laws or regulations, but by the standards of industry associations awarding the certification.

A longer list of usual qualities of certifications are given in TEN 25-19.

<https://www.careeronestop.org/Credentials/Toolkit/find-certifications.aspx>

## What About

- Forklift Training?
- ServeSafe Training?
- Safety Training?



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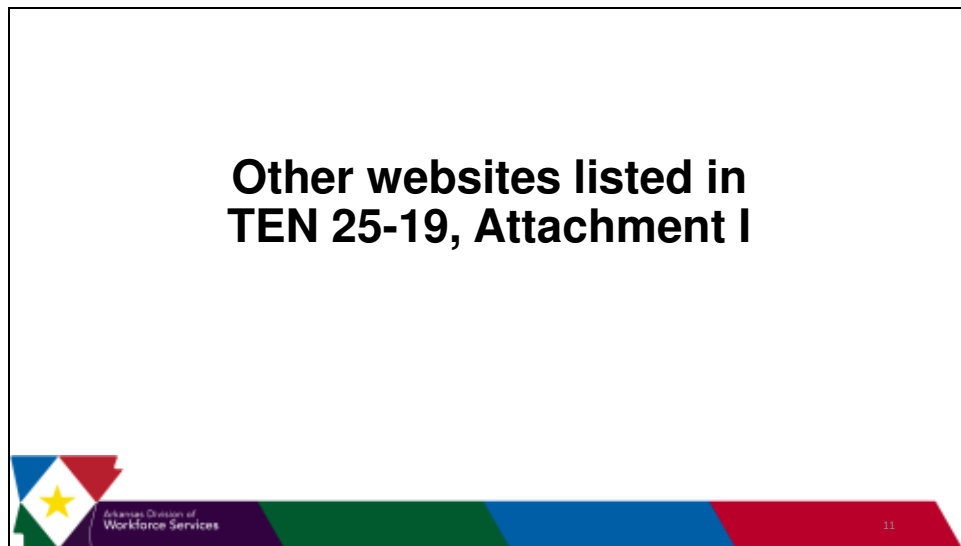
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What about short-term training? They are in the Career One-Stop Training. Some are required for particular jobs. They require an assessment at the end of the training.

I understand your pain and confusion.

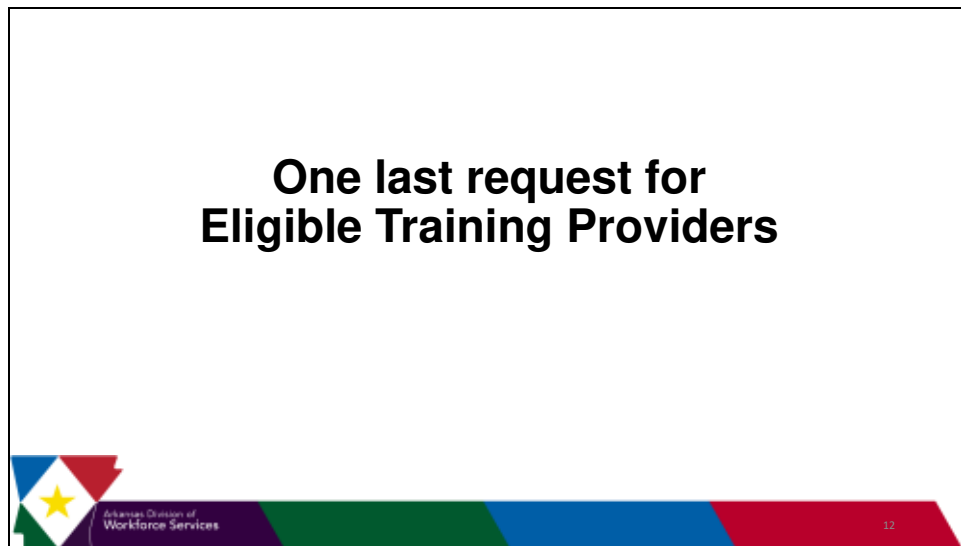
These are good training for jobs, especially for people with limited abilities.

BUT – Federal guidance gives several reasons why they are not Occupational Skills Training, but the bottom line is that they are not programs of study. They are short courses. Because they are not OST, they are not funded with an ITA, and the training entities are not on the ETPL, so we won't discuss the matter here.



TEN 25-19 give many data bases for certifications and licenses in the last 4 pages of Attachment I. If you download the electronic version of the TEN, you can just click on a website and check out the databases. Some are more useful for Arkansas than others are.

You may also want to read the difference in certificates and certifications on page 6 of Attachment I.



One last request for ETPs that has nothing to do with credentials or your being on the ETPL, but it does relate to some of our performance measures.

If your training includes a particular test or assessment that must be passed before the student can proceed further, please let the people who are paying for the training know. It will help them out a great deal.

I'm talking about a benchmark exam or a stop-exam. For example, if you are a truck driving school and the student must pass the written CDL exam before going any further. If he or she doesn't pass it, the student must either drop out of school or pass the exam before he or she can go any further in the course. That's the type of exam I mean.